UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.16
14 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 30 June 1994, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. BUTLER	(Australia)
later:	Mr. BOTEZ (Vice-President)	(Romania)

CONTENTS

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, E/1994/34, Parts I, II and III, E/1994/35, E/1994/64 and Add.1 and 2, E/1994/84, E/1994/93)

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that it was appropriate for the segment on operational activities to follow the discussion of the agenda for development, since both topics dealt with the role of the United Nations in development, operational activities being the most visible manifestation of its role in that area.

The process of revitalization, restructuring and reform of the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields was well under way on three main tracks. The first was the restructuring, reform and revitalization of intergovernmental structures for policy dialogue on coordination and governance, which had begun in response to General Assembly resolution 48/162. Second was the reform of the management and delivery system for operational activities for development called for in resolution 47/199. The third part of the process, a review of the financial arrangements for such activities, as required by resolution 48/162, was still in progress. Although the current discussion would focus on the second strand of reform, it should be recognized that achievements in that area would remain incomplete if the reform process did not continue in the other two areas.

The key word in the discussion of operational activities was coordination, and a better understanding of the many expectations of coordination was needed. First, coordination involved a better exchange of information among members of the system, which would lead in turn to a sharing of resources between the different parts of the system. That sharing should

then progress to joint action on specific problems. Much of the work on improving the exchange of information took place within the central coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system, while the work of sharing of resources and joint action took place at the country level. Efforts were being made to strengthen it through the preparation of country strategy notes and the programme approach, both of which were essential to programme coordination. Some elements of programme coordination existed at the global and regional level, but true coordination in the form of joint action required a shared framework, such as Agenda 21. Coordination took place at the country level through country strategy notes, which were prepared on a voluntary basis by the Governments of recipient countries.

It was not enough to coordinate only within the United Nations system; coordination with Governments was vital. The capacity to execute projects within national Governments was increasing, and, in his view, the best technical assistance would make itself redundant. Coordination with Governments required as much emphasis as coordination within the system itself, and the country strategy note was the basic instrument of that improved coordination. In the future, greater emphasis should be placed on coordination of mainline development work with humanitarian activities.

The high-level segment on operational activities represented an innovation which had resulted from resolution 48/162. He urged the Council to concentrate its discussions on the overall sense of direction for the strengthening of coordination.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that, at the annual session of the UNDP Executive Board recently held in Geneva, the Board had endorsed the concept of sustainable human development and its four key dimensions of poverty elimination, employment generation, empowerment of women and the regeneration of the environment as an appropriate framework within which to assist programme countries in their endeavour to realize sustainable human development in line with their national development priorities. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly must

forcefully address the issue of the financing of operational activities in order to conclude the governance and financing aspects of the restructuring agreement reached earlier.

In translating sustainable human development into reality, UNDP had learned that development must be based on the participation and commitment of the beneficiaries if national capacity was to be built to the point that its impact would be sustained. Effective cooperation must be based on the ownership of the development process by the nationals. In most cases, the external partner was providing only one contribution to a larger development effort, and no external force could be a substitute for national management if sustained results were desired. The programme approach and national execution had been adopted as the basis for support to programme countries. While the role of the formal sector and of Governments was crucial, effective development must be inclusive, bringing in civil society both as beneficiaries and contributors to the process.

Transparency and accountability were long-standing concerns of those financing development cooperation. The new programme support document placed considerable emphasis on the clear definition of goals, targets, benchmarks and results, which must be measurable, and quantifiable whenever possible. Another major concern had been with the coordination of external resources and their integration with local resources at the country level. The primary responsibility lay with Governments, and UNDP continued to help Governments in some 30 countries to bring together development partners in support of national priority programmes through coordination mechanisms such as the round table. In other countries, UNDP contributed to the preparation of technical cooperation aspects of consultative group meetings organized by the World Bank. That reflected a growing recognition that a policy framework and an enabling environment at the country level were crucial for the effective transfer and use of external resources.

UNDP had a pivotal role to play in the coordination of operational activities at the country level. The General Assembly had recently reaffirmed

that such coordination should be entrusted to the resident coordinator, that the UNDP resident representative should normally be the resident coordinator, and that the resident coordinator should normally coordinate humanitarian assistance. A number of measures had been initiated to strengthen the resident coordinator network. In March 1994, the resident coordinator concept had been fully implemented, and a roster of UNDP staff members and consultants experienced in humanitarian and emergency operations had been established. A comprehensive approach to training had been developed, together with training initiatives for first-time resident representatives and coordinators. The quality of country office staff and the matching of country requirements with the strengths and qualifications of resident coordinators had been upgraded.

In the area of substantive programming, UNDP was working with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) on the matter of common premises and was conducting a further review of ways better to utilize programme and administrative resources at the country level in a coordinated and complementary manner. It was working on the revitalization of the high-level inter-agency task force between the World Bank and UNDP with a view to identifying new areas of collaboration, and was setting up substantive task forces with a number of agencies in order to rebuild partnerships and identify new initiatives.

The adoption of the word "system" to describe the agencies and organizations under the United Nations umbrella had not in itself established a system. In a diffuse and multi-centred system such as the United Nations, harmonization, convergence and coordination could be brought about only through a time-consuming process of consultation and consensus. Although the pace had been slow at times, the UNDP Secretariat had persevered and had achieved significant changes. The debate on the reform and restructuring of the United Nations system for operational activities could not be divorced from the issue of the resource base, however. Changes had been introduced in the governance of some of the major funds and the secretariat, but a renewed commitment by member countries was also needed, first to ensure that policy

coordination took place internally as well as in the international arena, and secondly to ensure that the enhanced financial resources due to accompany changes in governance and practice were forthcoming.

Mr. GRANT (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) said that Member States had already achieved a consensus on many of the priorities at the core of sustainable human development. The commitments made as a result of Agenda 21 and the World Summit for Children were two clear examples, in addition to goals such as basic education for all and health for all by the year 2000. However, in other areas, such as income generation for the poor, clear strategies and processes were still needed. The absence of a strategy for income generation undermined the very impressive progress that was being made in addressing the needs of children, for instance. The Economic and Social Council could play a role in identifying the gaps in the sustainable development "package" and ensuring that mechanisms were established to develop those strategies. Likewise, even the most well-defined strategy for addressing human need and poverty would not succeed unless it was closely linked to a macro-economic and external financial strategy. The Council had a responsibility under the Charter to provide links with the Bretton Woods institutions and to ensure a comprehensive approach to those issues.

In addition to defining strategies, the Council shared the responsibility for providing a framework for common action by the United Nations system. The Economic and Social Council had been instrumental in supporting efforts to link macro-economic and human concerns and had been the site of a seminal discussion related to "adjustment with a human face". Naturally, it would be fruitless to discuss development strategies without addressing the question of resources. As a vital part of the effort to secure adequate resources, the Council should ensure that available resources were devoted to high-priority activities. The so-called 20:20 initiative was an essential part of that renewed effort and attempted to ensure that at least 20 per cent of overseas development assistance and at least 20 per cent of

national budgets were devoted to meeting priority activities directly related to human need.

Another example of the role of the high-level operational activity segment related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, in which the General Assembly encouraged the United Nations organizations to collaborate at the strategic level, in support of government strategies. The country strategy note was one of the ways in which the United Nations system was promoting strategic collaboration. General Assembly resolution 47/199 also provided for a shift from the project to the programme approach, which established key goals representing the true priorities of the national Government and then structured assistance around the achievement of those goals. That approach required readiness to provide assistance in whatever form would best serve the goals. The division between technical assistance, capital assistance, cash or supplies had to be eliminated. In resolution 47/199 the Assembly also urged that the function of the resident coordinator system should be strengthened. Significant progress had been achieved in that regard, including the expansion of the pool of those eligible to be resident representatives and resident coordinators.

In conclusion, while the realization of sustainable human development and the establishment of the strategies of the United Nations system and of mechanisms to implement those strategies represented major challenges for the Organization, he stressed that there had been many positive achievements. For instance, UNICEF had recently conducted a country-by-country in-house review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, which had concluded that a majority of the countries were on their way to achieving a majority of the goals, thereby determining whether millions of children lived or died in the coming years.

Mrs. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme) said that, in the past five years, the resources of the World Food Programme (WFP) had doubled and that there had been a dramatic shift from development to emergency resources. Currently, two thirds of the resources were devoted to emergency

food relief and one third went toward development. In 1993, the World Food Programme had provided food to 47 million people throughout the world, most of whom were women and children. In coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme had provided food to all the major refugee locations around the world and had taken steps to improve its emergency response. It had also endeavoured to increase its collaborative partnership with non-governmental organizations. The World Food Programme valued the strong working relationship it maintained with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the area of emergency relief.

At the request of its governing body, the WFP had embarked on a major review of its policies, objectives and strategies, and would report to the Economic and Social Council in 1994, offering specific suggestions regarding changes in its rules and regulations. The World Food Programme would concentrate on using its resources for three interrelated purposes: to save lives in emergency situations, to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable people by providing them with food at critical times in their lives when food was vital for their survival and to help them grow and prosper and, lastly, to help build assets and promote self-reliance through labour-intensive work programmes that generated employment and income and constructed the infrastructure necessary for sustainable development. An example of such a programme was the "food for work" programme. Moreover, priority would also be given to supporting disaster mitigation, preparedness and rehabilitation activities as part of development programmes. Emphasis would be placed on directing food to women, who were the people most likely to ensure that the entire family would receive that food. With regard to resource policies, it had been decided that a single pool should be established for core activities, with a global reserve for larger unpredictable emergencies, and that greater flexibility in resource management should be introduced.

With regard to General Assembly resolutions 48/162 and 47/199, the World Food Programme was proposing organizational changes that would be considered by an open-ended working group of its governing body and ultimately submitted

for review to the Economic and Social Council, the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the General Assembly and, lastly, the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization. Those changes included modifications in WFP regulations that would enable it to implement the programme approach.

The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), which was currently chaired by WFP, had convened its high-level meeting in Bangladesh. It was the first time that that body had met in a developing country. The meeting reflected the high priority given by all JCGP partners to the coordination of operational activities in the field. Moreover, the Joint Consultative Group on Policy had invited UNHCR and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to participate as observers at JCGP meetings, with a view to strengthening the coordination of action between those organizations. The World Food Programme and its JCGP partners were committed to working together to reach hungry and poor people throughout the world.

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that General Assembly resolution 48/162 had not provided practical details for the format of the current session of the Council, leaving considerable leeway for interpretation regarding its implementation. Noting that it would have been preferable for the debate on operational activities to be directly linked to the general policy theme of the session, namely an agenda for development, he hoped that that link would be established in the future so that the main theme of the session would receive in-depth and exhaustive treatment.

It was a matter of great concern that there was a crucial lack of resources for operational activities and an ever-growing trend on the part of some funds and programmes to disregard their operational duties in favour of new activities that did not correspond to their mandate or their capacity. That practice was detrimental, as it did not fill the donor gap but potentially gave rise to disappointment and resignation on the part of the recipient countries. Development was generated in the field, through contact with daily life and by drawing on the local assets of each community; that fundamental fact had to be taken into account if the operational activities of

the United Nations system were to achieve their potential. A top priority was the strengthening of the capacity of the various entities of that system, individually and collectively, to implement effective programmes and projects in the field that were adapted to the needs and priorities of the recipient countries. In that regard, the Group of 77 attached particular importance to the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, particularly with regard to the programme approach, national execution, decentralization, inter-agency coordination and harmonization of the programming cycles of the different institutions.

The time had come also to evaluate the results of the new system for providing programme support and to ensure that it did not lead to a downgrading of the role of the specialized agencies and regional commissions in the attainment of the objectives of operational activities. The financing of operational activities was a topic that should be discussed in consultations, as provided in paragraph 34 of General Assembly resolution 48/162. The Group of 77 continued to hold the view that the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations should result in a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, as stated in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 48/162. The Group of 77 had noted with regret a growing tendency on the part of certain donor countries to introduce new conditions that linked the granting of assistance to purely political considerations. Such practices called into question the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system which should be their universal, voluntary and grant nature, neutrality and multilateralism.

While the developing countries recognized the importance of a system of evaluation and auditing for operational activities, those systems should not become a form of interference in the implementation of the various programmes

in the recipient countries, whose national goals and priorities had to remain the basis for all programming.

Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union had hoped for a more focused discussion during the initial high-level segment on the issues of coordination, the functioning of the funds and programmes and aid to social sectors. He regretted that informal consultations convened for that purpose had produced no results. A generally accepted definition of what constituted human priority expenditure would be needed before further work could be undertaken on the 20:20 concept. It was already possible, on the other hand, to see a real improvement in the effectiveness of Executive Boards, notably that of UNDP/UNFPA, an improvement that should be extended to other governing bodies. He would like to address three main topics: coordination, improving the focus of the United Nations system and the delivery of aid by the United Nations system.

As a result of General Assembly resolution 47/199, the pool from which UNDP recruited resident coordinators had been widened, enabling UNDP to hire the most qualified applicants for the job. The Council should send a clear message to the heads of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies that the United Nations must develop a new spirit of partnership. Each organization must commit itself to closer cooperation at the headquarters level. In the field, the resident coordinators and their staff must be well trained and fully supported by the system.

The United Nations organizations could achieve better focus without sacrificing their responsiveness or the needs of individual developing countries. Following a review by the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the governing bodies of the agencies could identify areas where there was overlapping or where a particular agency had no obvious role to play. The country strategy note was a promising tool for identifying the needs of recipient countries.

With regard to the delivery of aid by the United Nations system, greater priority should be given to the evaluation of results, so that it could be

more accurately determined whether programmes were providing value for money. Clearer lines of authority in the execution and implementation of programmes should be established. The European Union would also like to see greater transparency in the cost structure, particularly with regard to administrative costs. Harmonizing United Nations funding cycles with national budget cycles, plans and strategies remained a problem, but the idea was worth pursuing.

The European Union hoped that the high-level segment could accomplish much of the work of preparing next year's triennial policy review and looked forward to participating constructively in the consultations already under way.

Miss DEGN (Denmark) said that the agreement of December 1993 on an initial package of reforms of United Nations activities in the economic and social fields gave cause for optimism. It was essential that the United Nations should strengthen its operational muscle. She welcomed the replacement of the former governing bodies of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF with smaller Executive Boards.

One of the basic issues facing the Council was financing. Resources for operational activities must be found on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. The current situation, in which a small group of countries carried the larger share of the financial burden, was untenable in the long run for both donor and recipients. The funding system in the Nordic reform proposals, combining assessed contributions, multi-year negotiated pledges and voluntary contributions, would provide United Nations development agencies with a more stable economic basis and contribute to a more even distribution of the burden.

After considering the modalities of financing, the Council needed to decide what to finance. Urgent action was required to mobilize resources for basic social services. Experience had shown that developing countries achieved higher and more sustainable levels of development when more was spent on primary needs. Yet development aid was largely spent in other sectors with no direct bearing on the alleviation of poverty. Structural adjustment often

resulted in severe cuts in the public sector, particularly in health and education services. Her country was already allocating a large part of its official development aid to areas such as health, nutrition and population.

She found the 20:20 concept a useful basis for discussion. She endorsed the pairing of economic growth with basic social services and the principle of a shared commitment by recipient and donor countries. An initial discussion of the 20:20 concept today could give impetus to further discussions of the concept at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen.

Mr. McCALL (United States of America) said that, through a number of recent conferences and summits and the Secretary-General's agenda for development, a consensus was gradually emerging on the nature of the problems facing the global community in the post-cold-war era; unfortunately, the capacity of international institutions to implement the necessary solutions had not kept pace. The United Nations system was facing greater challenges than ever before, but after decades of neglect by Member States the system was fragmented and compartmentalized. There were more than 30 different entities dealing with population issues. As another example, while UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP had made heroic efforts in crisis spots around the world, there was no single United Nations organization with a specific mandate to coordinate the reintegration of refugees into their societies. The system was suffering from the rigidities of bureaucratic fiefdoms built up over the years. It was imperative that each institution should be evaluated on the basis of the comparative advantage it brought to an integrated approach to a relief/development continuum strategy, so that marginal programmes and useless expenditures could be eliminated.

In addition to institutional collaboration and complementarity, it was essential that the macro-economic strategies of the Bretton Woods institutions and the humanitarian outlook of the United Nations agencies should be harmonized. Among other things, the issues of natural and man-made disasters and the unique characteristics of each country would have to be factored into macro-economic strategies.

Recent reform efforts, such as country strategy notes and an enhanced role for resident coordinators, were important steps toward improving field-level coordination, but more fundamental reforms were required. The recommendations made by Catherine Gwin of the Overseas Development Council, and particularly the idea of re-inventing UNDP's coordinating role in the field, were worth pursuing.

Programmes should empower people economically, socially and politically to solve their own problems by giving them ownership and control over projects and resources. "Top-down" development strategies should be jettisoned in favour of community-based participatory approaches. Again, the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions would have to be brought into harmony with that approach.

Sustainable human development was an essential organizing principle for United Nations operational activities. It was the task of the Council to ensure that the system was prepared to act on the recommendations that would undoubtedly result from the upcoming series of global conferences. It could do so by putting people first, rather than protecting bureaucratic fiefdoms. A programme of sustainable development could only grow out of the experiences of ordinary people and their nations of what problems should be addressed and how they should be solved. It should involve, respond, and be accountable, to the people who must live with the results.

Mr. KÄÄRIÄ (Observer for Finland) said that his delegation was pleased with the steps so far taken to implement the reforms mentioned in General Assembly resolution 48/162. There were already tangible improvements at the executive-board level, especially in the case of the UNDP Executive Board. His delegation was anxious, however, to see speedier implementation of the reforms and was particularly concerned about the Executive Board of WFP. The reform package should not be opened for re-negotiation in the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes. One critical area of reform still to be addressed was the financing mechanism. His delegation looked forward to participating in the forthcoming consultations on the issue.

The results of the present year's operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council should be carefully analysed to provide guidance for the preparation of the meeting next year. There would seem to be a need to agree in the future on one or two topics on which the high-level meetings should focus.

He would like to suggest some guidelines for the annual reports of the programmes and funds. In a very condensed way, they should highlight to what extent the agency had carried out policies formulated by the General Assembly, or the action programmes of global conferences, or followed policy guidance given by the Council. Annual reports should point out critical areas or difficulties experienced and should outline the organization's main policy orientation and any major new initiatives. In addition, the Council should announce a topic on which the agencies were to report. The topics for the coming year might be the issue of operationalizing the concept of human development with an emphasis on women.

Another suggested topic, the 20:20 concept, would be an issue at the World Summit for Social Development and the Cairo Summit to be held later in the year. While his country attached great importance to allocating resources to social sectors, it felt that there must be a thorough and critical discussion of what the 20:20 concept might imply before it was adopted internationally. The first question was one of policies versus resources. Without the right policy mix, there was a danger that some resources might not be used in the most effective way and investments might not have the expected results. Some investments in social areas were not sustainable because the Government concerned did not have the means to maintain the system. Foreign aid must always be in support of national efforts. Another issue to be considered was which sectors were most in need of foreign aid, that is, of foreign currency or foreign expertise, and which sectors could be adequately addressed with local resources. Those were only a few of the questions that required full discussion in relation to the 20:20 concept. He had not touched upon the delivery side of the system, because his delegation felt that it

could be more meaningfully discussed by experts at the working level of the segments.

Mr. GORITA (Romania) said that the task of the specialized agencies was becoming increasingly complex, since they were expected to be knowledgeable about not only their own fields but also the specific conditions of each country. Romania was one of a group of States undergoing a transition from a centralized economy to a market-oriented one. Thanks to the positive and constructive cooperation of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, operational activities for development had been tailed to the specific needs of Romania's economy and society. Programmes had been implemented to develop small and medium-sized private enterprises, to support the privatization process and to promote much needed market institutions. With the cooperation of UNFPA and UNICEF, programmes in mother and child health care, family counselling, family planning and national census-taking had been established. The success of a significant number of such specifically oriented programmes could serve as an example for similar activities in other countries in transition.

Direct and indirect losses to Romania as a result of sanctions imposed against Iraq and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were estimated at approximately $US 10 billion. It was time for operational activities for development to address the whole issue of sanctions and their impact on third States. Romania wished to express its gratitude to those countries that had voted in favour of providing assistance to it through UNDP.

His Government was concerned about the cost-sharing arrangement for the UNDP office in Bucharest. The per capita gross national product of Romania had been less than $US 1,400 in 1991 and well below $US 1,000 in 1993. Both figures were below the limit established for a cost-sharing arrangement of 50 per cent. His delegation therefore hoped that UNDP would take appropriate action in that regard.

In conclusion, he wished to emphasize that the decisions taken by agency administrators and governing bodies to decentralize their activities had had

an extremely positive effect on cooperation between Romania and UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Mr. MATHISEN (Norway) expressed the hope that the operational activities segment would function like the international development council envisaged in the Nordic United Nations project. More focused discussion would be a major step in that direction. The substantive content of the operational activities segment still needed to be defined. Substantive themes for the operational activities segment should be identified during the Council's organizational meeting at the beginning of each year. The themes should be relevant to United Nations development organizations, and could include coordination, financing, reform, or issues discussed in the World Development Report 1994 or the Human Development Report - poverty alleviation, the promotion of social sector development and women in development. Documentation which analysed problems and opportunities rather than merely describing them would facilitate the discussions.

His delegation welcomed the improved coordination and targeting of United Nations development cooperation in each country. The new United Nations country strategy notes were vital in that connection. The organizations of the United Nations should ensure that their individual country programmes adhered to that common framework. It was a matter of concern that, according to some evaluation reports, the implementation capacity of programme countries was not developing rapidly enough.

Every effort must be made to implement the recommendations of the triennial policy review at all levels of the United Nations development system. The role of resident coordinators must be better defined. Resident coordinators must have greater authority to ensure country-level coordination and should receive substantive support from UNDP. To that end, the Programme's capacity for analysis and policy development within the United Nations system must be enhanced. Resources for country-level coordination must be increased. Such coordination would not necessarily undermine the identity of each individual organization. However, the division of labour

among the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes must be reviewed further.

The triennial policy review of 1995 should analyse opportunities for or obstacles to a more effective and coordinated United Nations system at the country level. It should also consider possibilities for earmarking more resources for coordination through mechanisms that would share and recover costs for services rendered to the entire United Nations system.

Field activities of the United Nations development system were fragmented, overlapping and not sufficiently focused on key, strategic areas. If United Nations development cooperation did not translate into more concrete results at the country level, it might not be able to count on the same high level of contributions from Norway or, perhaps, from other donor countries either.

Mrs. CHINERY-HESSE (Deputy Director-General, International Labour Office) stressed that coordination must allow agencies sufficient flexibility to fulfil their core mandates. The International Labour Organization (ILO), a tripartite organization, would support coordination provided it was guaranteed continued access to workers and employers organizations and to Governments. The ILO welcomed the comments by the Administrator of UNDP concerning the need to work within development frameworks established by countries themselves. It recognized that other parties in civil societies as well as Governments could contribute to the development process. Innovative participatory approaches would have to be developed in order to ensure their participation. The machinery for consultation with Governments at the country level must also be perfected. It was important to define at whose behest activities were being carried out.

The ILO had established multidisciplinary themes for the management of its operational programmes and maintained an active partnership policy. It sought to ensure greater complementarity between research and operational activities. An effort was being made to respond more directly to the needs and priorities of its constituents while focusing on its core mandate. Its

goal was to "do fewer things better". At the country level, it was implementing together with its constituents - Governments, employers and workers - a system of country-objective reviews in order to identify needs and set priorities. The country reviews provided a framework for a programme of activities to be implemented jointly by the ILO and the country concerned.

In order to respond quickly and flexibly to emerging needs, the ILO had established multdisciplinary teams in various subregions . The teams were responsible for programme formulation, policy advice and technical support for programmes and projects. As full partners with representatives of the United Nations system, they were expected to lend their support to inter-agency efforts at the country level and to resident coordinators.

Some problems had been encountered in implementing the new approach. The demand for Technical Support Services at the Programme Level (TSS-1) far exceeded available resources and TSS-1 had become a catalyst for work under regular budget and country-oriented programmes. The original objectives of the new arrangement for Technical Support Services at the Project Level (TSS-2) had, to a large extent, not been achieved. The role of nearly all agencies in UNDP-financed projects from 1993 to 1994 had been reduced much more drastically than expected and only a very small quantity of TSS-2 resources had been approved to ensure technical support for nationally executed projects. The reasons for that would probably be analysed during an evaluation, the results of which were to be presented to the UNDP Executive Board session in October. In the circumstances, she feared that some countries might be deprived of the full potential and technical support of the agencies. The agencies were expected to become "centres of excellence" and to provide high-quality policy advice. However, in order to become centres of excellence, they needed continuous feedback from operational activities. In order to provide policy advice, they must be familiar with the problems of project design and implementation.

She was pleased to note that, at the recent annual session of its Executive Board, UNDP had adopted a new strategic orientation which addressed

some of those concerns. The ILO fully supported the goal of sustainable human development, for the principle of social justice was enshrined in its Constitution.

Although there was no single institution in the United Nations system responsible for the reintegration of persons displaced by conflict, she was pleased to report that the ILO, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and other agencies were working together in that area. That was a good example of successful coordination at Headquarters and in the field.

Mr. SAMUELSSON (Observer for Sweden) said that, while he agreed that the United Nations development system needed to be reformed, he also believed that the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 48/162 represented a major achievement. His delegation was pleased to observe the Executive Boards, established under resolution 48/162 for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, developing their working methods during the transitional year. In the context of its own transition, the Economic and Social Council should organize the format of its high-level segment so as to facilitate decision-making on key issues. Those decisions would then guide the Executive Boards of the programmes, agencies and funds in their work.

The new financing system, the next step in the reform process, must provide for both a review of the level of resources available for programmes and the means of putting resources on a stable, predictable and assured basis.

Referring to General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review, he said that an integrated approach at the country level must be strengthened through country strategy notes and the resident coordinator functions. Only one country strategy note had been completed thus far, but he hoped that that number would increase and that operational activities would become less fragmented. Noting the vital role of the resident coordinators, he stressed that their appointment was an extremely crucial management decision.

His delegation had already emphasized the importance of a more clearly defined role for the United Nations in the economic and social fields and of

the identification of priorities. Top priority should be accorded to focusing United Nations development activities on the poorer developing countries. That was a reflection of Sweden's own development policy, which stressed poverty eradication. Through the network of country offices, mainly UNDP offices, the United Nations could play a supportive and coordinating role in other countries as well. Such activities should be financed primarily through cost-sharing arrangements and only to a limited extent through the regular budgets of the programmes and funds.

There was no easy formula for achieving those goals, but experience had demonstrated the importance of activities aimed at achieving broad-based sustainable economic growth. Such activities should promote a market economy and prescribe a clear role for the State within the framework of democracy and respect for human rights. Other important measures include political and economic reform programmes, debt relief, investment in infrastructure and technical assistance, particularly in the field of capacity-building. At the same time, vulnerable groups must be protected, if necessary, through additional targeted activities in the social sectors. A programme approach was generally more constructive than the traditional project approach. The development of human and financial resources for improving social infrastructure depended on active community participation and a health economy. The exact mix of activities must be determined on a case-by-case basis by the United Nations and the countries concerned in international forums such as the consultative groups led by the World Bank.

The United Nations system should be extremely careful in setting overall quantitative goals such as the 20:20 compact presented in the Human Development Report 1994. Such concepts tended to simplify very difficult and crucial questions, diverting attention from the substantive issues. The concept must be clarified and its definition made more consistent. To that end, it should be discussed in greater detail. His delegation was prepared to participate in those discussions during the session of the Council and in the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) expressed his delegation's full support for the statement made by the representative of Greece on behalf of the European Union. His delegation attached importance to the reform of the operational activities segment which, in the past, had produced few practical results.

Donors and recipients alike had complained that the role of individual agencies in the United Nations system was lacking in clarity. There had also been complaints about unnecessary duplication of efforts and inadequate inter-governmental policy guidance. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/162 on further measures for restructuring and revitalization provided an opportunity to change that situation. The reform process should emphasize policy guidance, priority-setting, improved coordination at the field level and a more integrated approach to development.

His delegation welcomed the improvements in coordination both at Headquarters and in the field since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199. In particular, the widening of the pool from which UNDP recruited resident coordinators was a major step forward. The Economic and Social Council must now send a clear message to the heads of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies: the United Nations system must develop a new spirit of partnership. That was the message delivered by the Secretary-General in an agenda for development. At Headquarters, such a partnership would require the genuine commitment of each organization to working more closely with the other organizations in the system. Organizations must provide their field staff with the tools for effective cooperation by, inter alia, ensuring that joint programmes were not delayed because some organizations had decentralized extensive approval authority to the field while others had yet to streamline headquarters approval procedures. In the field, the system must give full support to resident coordinators and provide better training for both resident coordinators and other United Nations staff members. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to strengthening the resident coordinator system.

The organizations of the United Nations development system could highlight their comparative advantages without compromising their responsiveness to the needs of individual recipient countries. For example, it would be useful to identify areas in which there was unnecessary duplication or involvement in areas where agencies had no role to play. At the country level, the country strategy note was an excellent tool for responding collectively to the needs of recipient Governments. However, where United Nations involvement was not appropriate, other aid agencies, the private sector or non-governmental organizations should be invited to carry out certain tasks.

Lastly, greater priority should be accorded to evaluation activities in order to determine whether programmes were achieving their objectives. The means of implementation must also be reviewed. While progress had been achieved in both capacity-building and national execution, the United Nations system was not necessarily doing enough to enable recipient countries to take responsibility for their own development, in particular for the poorest groups.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) said that UNDP should focus on its role as coordinator between programme countries and bilateral or multilateral donor institutions. Programmes for each country should be tailored to the country's individual needs and priorities. Indicative planning figures (IPFs), whose comprehensiveness and accuracy had been demonstrated, should not be replaced by new, less effective indicators which might result in the politicization of programmes. His delegation welcomed the proposals put forward by the Administrator of UNDP concerning priorities for the sixth programming cycle. It also welcomed the Programme's goals of focusing on poverty eradication, environmental protection, the creation of new employment opportunities, the advancement of women and vulnerable groups, the promotion of national capacity in the field of aid coordination, the reform of the private and public sectors and the increasing importance of human development programmes. The five-year programming cycle should be maintained in order to ensure continuity.

His delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on funding operational activities for development within the United Nations system (A/48/940) and hoped that the consultations held on the report would be open-minded. A decline in contributions had already lowered IPFs by 30 per cent during the fifth programming cycle. Increased emphasis on cost-sharing and a further decline in contributions might well lead to the demise of many programmes benefiting developing countries. In the final analysis, the improvement of operational activities depended on putting financial resources on a stable and predictable basis.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.17
14 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 30 June 1994, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. BUTLER	(Australia)
later:	Mrs. WAZIR ALI (Vice-President)	(Pakistan)

CONTENTS

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued) (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, E/1994/34, Parts I, II and III, E/1994/35, E/1994/64 and Add.1 and 2, E/1994/84 and E/1994/93)

Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan), noting that the worldwide decline in official development assistance (ODA) was unlikely to improve in the near future, said that despite domestic economic difficulties, Japan had increased its ODA. It was of critical importance to maintain the system of voluntary contributions as it allowed for a very flexible response to a range of needs and purposes. At the same time, in order for the United Nations development system to improve the stability of its resource base, it must improve its efficiency and effectiveness thus demonstrating its responsibility to donor countries.

Turning to the country strategy note, he said that it provided a basis for a comprehensive and coherent development plan and should be further promoted; it would be interesting to hear about any problems other countries had experienced in formulating and implementing such notes. The efforts of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) to harmonize the programming cycles of various United Nations agencies should be encouraged. While the programme approach was useful in maximizing existing resources, methods for assessing its results must be improved. Recipient countries must take responsibility for national execution thus ensuring that external assistance was effectively utilized.

Concerning the resident coordinator system, which his country strongly supported, efforts made to strengthen it should reflect the requirements of the countries concerned; the experiences and views of the resident coordinators should also be fully reflected in future decision-making. He

sought information on obstacles encountered in efforts to decentralize the organization as well as on the contents of training being provided to staff in the field.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Observer for Austria) said that given the decreasing contributions from the donor community, special efforts would have to be made to secure better coordination and integration of operational activities; in that regard, a series of measures should be undertaken. His delegation considered the programme approach a very useful tool for strengthening collaboration among the various United Nations programmes and agencies. Austria also supported the country strategy note which was a frame of reference for promoting cooperation within the United Nations system.

The common interpretation of the concept of national execution should be the norm for executing United Nations operational activities as it would enhance capacity-building in programme activities. Austria also supported the strengthening of the role of the resident coordinator who would have to facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach and consult with all the actors involved. It also supported the 20:20 compact which addressed the most urgent basic human development needs while providing for the most effective utilization of resources.

Ms. FRECHETTE (Canada), referring to the 20:20 compact put forward by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), said that her Government strongly believed that increased attention to social sector spending, particularly basic human needs, was critical to the success of development efforts. The critical issue was how to ensure that the definition of human development priorities met the concerns of both donors and recipient Governments. In preparation for the World Summit for Social Development, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council should work together with member Governments and other key actors in order to reach a common understanding that would help to ensure that efforts were increasingly people-centred.

Canada was a strong supporter of the country strategy note as it was the best way to ensure that programme countries not only got what they needed but also got it in a coherent way that made the most efficient use of the resources available. National Governments and the representatives of United Nations development agencies in the field would have to work on the country strategy notes. In that regard, well-functioning field committees would be a prerequisite. Resident coordinators would also have to ensure that the work of agencies not represented in the field was taken fully into consideration. Finally, her delegation believed that the reform of the United Nations in the economic and social fields provided the international community with a golden opportunity to put the emphasis on the individual country rather than on individual agencies.

Mr. WISNARMURTI (Indonesia) said that although some progress had been achieved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, much remained to be accomplished. In that connection, if the trend towards declining resources for operational activities persisted, it would severely curtail the ability of developing countries to meet their development goals and the United Nations system to discharge its mandates. Therefore, concrete action and renewed commitment by the major donors was of particular importance. It was equally important that consultations on the governance and funding structure of the operational activities should be undertaken in a spirit of partnership and constructive dialogue. Referring to General Assembly resolution 47/199, he noted that it was vital for the Organization to increase the efficiency of its operational activities otherwise it would not be able to play its role properly. In that connection, steps must be taken to curtail administrative costs. His delegation welcomed the efforts of JCGP to set targets for increasing the number of common premises and for consolidating administrative services. The harmonization of the programming cycles of the various members of JCGP with that of the development plans, strategies and budget cycles of recipient countries should also be addressed.

While his delegation supported the increased use of the programme approach, there was a need to further enhance awareness and knowledge of that approach as well as the benefits to be derived therefrom. He also welcomed the United Nations' commitment to national execution as a central norm of its operational activities. The United Nations' role in, and capacity for providing technical assistance to developing countries should be further strengthened in order to ensure that such commitment could be translated into reality. That was why priority attention should continue to be given to the need to strengthen the functioning of the resident coordinator system.

Mrs. WAZIR ALI (Pakistan) said that the steady decline and unpredictable nature of financial commitments made to the United Nations development system might jeopardize the initiatives of newly installed democratic Governments. The diminishing amount of resources being allocated to development and the increases in financing for emergency relief reflected not only political choices on the part of donors but also changing priorities. In that regard, specific data on the benefits accruing from development and emergency assistance programmes to each donor country would be useful.

There was a danger that the restructured Executive Boards of United Nations funds and programmes would become increasingly donor driven. The success of any programme required the participation of donors and recipients alike, and the latter must be fully involved in all decisions taken by the Boards. Development driven donor assistance programmes not only distorted the development goals of the countries concerned but also led to a considerable waste of scarce resources.

She pointed out that the primary responsibility for preparing country strategy notes rested with the recipient Governments involved. Documents prepared by United Nations agencies, however well-intentioned, were no substitute for management by a Government of its economy. Moreover, while a programme approach was critical to success in the development process, it presented the United Nations system as a whole with a challenge, for it called for coordination within the system, on the one hand, and with national

priorities on the other. Thus far her delegation has seen little evidence of the former.

Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that operational activities for development were of the greatest importance to FAO, which provided well over $US 300 million for technical cooperation activities annually. Those activities were aimed at improving food security through increased food production and enhanced access to food. Because rural people constituted more than one half of the world's population and almost two thirds of the developing world, FAO's operational activities must focus on those who derived their livelihood from the agricultural sector, and especially on low-income food-deficit countries. A major new programme had recently been endorsed to increase food production in support of food security in those countries. A streamlined structure also had been endorsed to provide a consolidated base at Headquarters for the provision of direct services to FAO's member nations through assistance on policy, investment and the implementation of field operations, as well as increased decentralized technical capacities at the regional and subregional levels to ensure more direct access to FAO's experience and expertise in technical fields. Adequate financial resources should be made available for such assistance on an assured basis.

FAO fully supported the programme approach and national execution. However, a clearer division of labour among the specialized agencies was required, and full use should be made of the agencies, particularly their technical support services, throughout all stages of programmes and projects executed by national Governments. FAO sought to ensure sustainability by increasing the use of existing national capacities in its programmes and projects.

Although UNDP remained a major development partner of FAO and was still the largest single source of funds for projects, its share of the total assistance delivered by FAO in 1993 had declined substantially, and the outlook did not indicate a change in that trend. FAO regretted the overall

shortage in funding of UNDP core activities, which had led to a reduction of country indicative planning figures (IPFs).

Welcome steps had been taken to establish more substantive collaboration and systematic dialogue with UNDP in various areas, most notably in the field of food security. FAO also was preparing a monograph for UNDP on capacity-building requirements for the sustainable development of agriculture, fisheries and forestry. The tripartite nature of UNDP programmes should ensure that adequate technical support was obtained from the specialized agencies, whose involvement also should be sought in UNDP activities not funded from its core resources. FAO was ready to enhance its collaboration with UNDP in that regard.

FAO also called for closer collaboration with the Office for Project Services (OPS), which should lead to the increased involvement of FAO in OPS activities through technical and direct input-related services. Recalling the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/162, he emphasized that the World Food Programme had been conceived and established jointly by the United Nations and FAO and that decisions concerning the future governance of WFP were their shared responsibility. The resolution assigned to the Economic and Social Council an enhanced policy role with respect to programmes and funds, a role which FAO expected the Economic and Social Council and the FAO Council to share with respect to WFP. It was important that WFP should continue to have recourse to FAO's expertise in order to relate food aid to broader food security and agricultural development issues. FAO thus looked forward to working closely on the elaboration of the draft resolution called for in resolution 48/162. The text which emerged would in turn provide input for the adoption of a parallel resolution at the FAO Conference in November 1995.

Mrs. Wazir Ali (Pakistan) took the Chair.

Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that his Government attached great importance to increasing the efficiency of the operational activities of the United Nations within the framework of the concept of stable

human development. To that end, inter-agency coordination both at Headquarters and in the field must be further improved. That required a strengthening of the coordinating functions of JCGP and of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ). Another effective tool was the resident coordinator system. There was a need to strengthen field coordination committees so as to harmonize programming cycles and improve the mechanism of preparing country strategies, with the active participation of field representatives and resident coordinators. Greater use of common premises would help strengthen coordination, promote inter-agency cooperation and reduce administrative costs.

The further development and consolidation of the programme approach and national execution were important means of increasing the efficiency of operational activities. His delegation supported the idea of an individualized programme approach linked to national plans and priorities and noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in that area. In order to expand national execution, it was necessary to pay closer attention to the creation of national capacity in recipient countries. Joint programmes in human resources development, environmental protection and the fight against HIV/AIDS were good examples of real improvements in inter-agency cooperation.

There was an urgent need for a comprehensive approach to the concept of sustainable human development. The inter-disciplinary nature of that concept could encourage the United Nations agencies to combine their efforts to achieve socially oriented and environmentally sound development and create a broad basis for the elaboration of new approaches to multilateral cooperation. Mutual recognition of national interests, economic partnership, equitable access to markets and the responsibility of States for their economic policies should form the basis of such approaches. His delegation agreed that there must be a rational division of labour between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, other multilateral organizations and non-governmental groups concerned with technical assistance, on the basis of their comparative advantage.

In the search for optimal forms and methods of work of the governing bodies of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, it was important to be guided by a flexible and pragmatic attitude, especially in the first year of transition. A comprehensive analysis of their activities should be carried out in 1995, and adjustments should be made, if necessary.

His delegation agreed with other delegations on the need to maintain the practice of making voluntary contributions and at the same time increase the effectiveness of the use of financial resources, which would help offset the shortfall of funds. It supported the efforts of the Administrator to mobilize additional resources.

A comprehensive, integrated and universal approach must be taken to the issues of international cooperation for development, including operational activities. His delegation welcomed the intensification of the activities of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA on the problems of the "economies in transition", especially in respect of establishing and strengthening the institutional, legislative and managerial foundations of market economies, promoting entrepreneurship, enhancing external economic relations, attracting foreign investment, and reducing the social costs of market reforms, especially for the most vulnerable population groups. In that context, the decision of the UNICEF Executive Board to establish a special unit dealing with the problems of the countries in transition was welcome; his delegation hoped that the UNDP Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States would soon be transformed into a regional bureau.

Mr. Butler (Australia) resumed the Chair.

Mr. ANSARI (India) said that the goal of the operational activities of the United Nations system was a partnership to promote individual and collective self-reliance through endogenous capacity-building in developing countries. The United Nations system was expected to remain mindful of the specific mandates for the partnership as defined in a series of General Assembly resolutions. His delegation noted that considerable efforts had been made to improve the governance of United Nations funds and

programmes, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/162, and it wondered whether equal efforts had been made to ensure more stable, predictable and assured funding. It was time to focus not on theoretical redefinitions but, rather, on concrete action to promote sustainable growth and development in developing countries.

No new funding mechanism would succeed without the political commitment to share the world's dwindling resources on a more equitable basis, in order to optimize universal welfare. Innovative proposals like the 20:20 proposal which did not generate additional resources might even result in reductions, and did not enjoy a consensus. His country had increased its contribution at the most recent pledging conference. It was unfortunate that the core funding for the year had shown a marked decline.

His delegation also was concerned at the attempts to chip away at the principles of sovereignty, universality, neutrality and partnership. The developing countries were being asked to tailor internal policies to yardsticks which bore little relevance to their needs; moreover, while conditionalities were imposed on developing countries, the obligations of the developed nations were being glossed over. His delegation was particularly concerned at what appeared to be an attempt to determine the contours of future international cooperation. The various responsibilities and the limits of international obligations arising from the past must be assessed before they were heralded as steps for the future. Sustained economic growth in developing countries, without any external restrictions or interference, was the only way to improve the general welfare through a higher level of development.

The Human Development Report 1994 set aside recognized quantitative yardsticks accepted by Member States and sought, using new qualitative inputs not yet endorsed in any decision or resolution, to pass moral judgements on Member States. It also utilized data selectively and was thus incomplete and inaccurate. It should therefore be treated as no more than a compendium of views expressed by a group of economists for study by Member States.

Scarce resources would be more successfully absorbed if decisions on their utilization were left entirely to recipient Governments, which were the best judges of what the national requirements were. Disproportionate emphasis on external advisers and programme managers would be detrimental to the development of indigenous technology and expertise. The more such resources were utilized for the transfer of appropriate technology, the more progress would be made towards national execution. Developing countries which were capable of national execution also were capable of independently evaluating and monitoring programmes.

Resident coordinators had played a crucial role in the coordination of development activities, and they should not be burdened with other activities. Lastly, it was too early to assess the working of the newly restructured Executive Boards. They did appear to be functioning more efficiently, and the commitment of all Member States to ensuring the effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/162 was unquestioned.

Mr. NIE (China) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77. His delegation was deeply concerned at the programme reductions and reduced activities that had been necessary owing to the inadequate funding of operational activities for development. It hoped that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/48/940 would facilitate an expeditious solution of the problem. The level of resources made available was a reflection of political choices made by Member States, and no funding mechanism could by itself determine total resource flows. The developed countries had a greater responsibility in that regard, particularly the major donors, who had yet to increase their contributions for United Nations operational activities for development. Without adequate resources, those activities would be weakened and efforts to restructure economic and social sectors rendered ineffective.

General Assembly resolution 47/199 provided integrated and comprehensive guidelines for operational activities for development. His delegation hoped

that all the specialized agencies of the United Nations system would make substantive progress in their respective field in the implementation of that resolution and that the triennial policy review slated for 1995 would show satisfactory results.

The purpose and effect of the country strategy notes was not very clear. His delegation hoped that the agencies would respect the wishes of the Governments concerned and avoid assuring their role. The agencies must still address the need for improved coordination and decentralization at the field level. His delegation did not wish to see year after year statements on the need to strengthen coordination and decentralization and yet see no substantive progress in programme planning and approval. The restructuring of the Economic and Social Council and the various programmes and funds operating in the field should result in greater progress in the future.

Lastly, his delegation endorsed the views expressed by the representative of India concerning the Human Development Report 1994.

Mr. PASHOVSKI (Bulgaria) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the preparatory work undertaken by the Council with regard to the 1995 comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development and believed that a clear picture of the status of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 would prove very useful. Development assistance through the United Nations system should continue to play a major role in fostering the development of recipient countries. His delegation therefore shared the concern expressed regarding the downward trend in the level of resources for those activities and, in light of decision 94/16 of the Executive Board of UNDP, it hoped that resources would be found to restore indicative planning figures to the original levels. The operational activities of the United Nations system should be strengthened while preserving the principles of universality and non-conditionality and the voluntary nature of contributions to defray their cost, in cooperation with donors and recipients alike.

A careful assessment of the progress made in implementing the programme approach and the use of country strategy notes was needed. The programme approach could open new opportunities for strengthening the capacity of Governments to manage inputs and activities and integrate policy-making and priority setting into operational programmes, thereby promoting the sustainability of development initiatives. It also could help attract additional resources and concentrate them on development areas with the greatest need for resources. The primary responsibility for programme execution should rest with recipient Governments. National execution and the programme approach were mutually supportive and could therefore help facilitate the integration of all facets of development cooperation.

The efficiency of the operational activities of the United Nations system could be streamlined by strengthening the field structure. Decentralization would improve responsiveness to the needs of recipient countries and ensure better coordination with their Governments. His delegation therefore supported efforts by UNDP to implement innovative approaches, which should be applied on a country-by-country basis with the active assistance of the resident coordinator. His country looked forward to enhanced and more efficient cooperation with the various United Nations programmes and agencies through the UNDP office in Sofia.

Guided by the principle of universality, the system should respond to all countries in need of assistance. He drew attention to the acute problems encountered by the countries in transition. In his own country, the strict implementation of trade and economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) compounded the impact of the sanctions against Iraq and Libya on his country and seriously undermined ongoing economic reform and jeopardized the democratic process. His delegation therefore hoped that the appropriate assistance would be provided in compliance with General Assembly resolution 48/210 and looked forward to more concrete approaches in that regard.

Mr. MANZ (Observer for Switzerland) said that the 1995 triennial policy review of operational activities should concentrate on the operationalization of the agenda for development. Furthermore, the financing arrangements must be reviewed, since it was crucial that the development activities of the system should be based on a solid financing mechanism.

His delegation welcomed the many positive experiences of field coordination; it seemed that, finally, the importance of better coherence among the different entities of the system had been recognized. It was only on the basis of truly interdisciplinary cooperation that the United Nations could continue to play its particular role in development cooperation. His delegation hoped that the efforts of the ILO training centre at Turin would be pursued so as to strengthen United Nations teamwork at the field level. It remained necessary to provide substantial support as well as appropriate means to the resident coordinators so that they could fulfil their functions; UNDP had a special responsibility in that regard.

His delegation was somewhat uneasy about the rather narrow interpretation given to the country strategy note which, in its view, should promote real interaction between the different actors and programmes of the system. When preparing a country strategy note, it was important to analyse, not only specific country needs, but also the resources that different United Nations entities could assemble in that country. Then, taking into account the input of other actors, a small number of priority areas of action should be selected for the United Nations system. The objective should be for the system to have the best possible impact in each country, through integrated action. In the next triennial review, special attention needed to be directed towards follow-up.

His delegation was somewhat disappointed with the evaluation of the experience gained in national execution, since it had expected a comparative appreciation of the impact and sustainability of nationally executed programmes and projects compared with other programmes and projects. Such a study should be conducted for the 1995 triennial review.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that since economic policy reforms were being undertaken in most developing countries, the operational activities of the United Nations system had to adapt to that new situation. Bangladesh appreciated the steps taken thus far to implement the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 47/199, the increasing interaction and collaboration amongst the organizations of the United Nations, and the efforts of JCGP.

His delegation noted with deep concern that at a time of growing needs at the country level, contributions to the funds and programmes of the United Nations system had declined significantly, even though General Assembly resolutions 48/162 and 47/199 had clearly spelt out the need for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development. The developing countries regarded development support through the United Nations system as an important supplement to their national efforts.

His delegation felt that the preparation of country strategy notes should be undertaken only at the request of Member States, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 47/199. As it was a new concept, there should be more studies on the details of the note. While welcoming the programme approach, Bangladesh felt that sustained efforts were needed to make programmes more responsive to national priorities and to involve national planning authorities in planning and executing them fully. There should be increased use of national expertise and institutions in both the formulation and the implementation of programmes and projects by United Nations funds and programmes.

In establishing a unified presence of the United Nations at field level, differences of thrust, interest and mandates of the various funds and programmes of the United Nations should be taken into account.

His delegation hoped that priority would continue to be placed on the needs of the least developed countries, particularly when allocating indicative planning figures. The triennial policy review would provide an

opportunity to take concrete measures to implement the recommendations of the mid-term review.

Mr. CHO (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation was pleased that development had begun to take its due place on the international agenda. the next step was to work toward the effective implementation of operational activities for development. In that regard, sustainable human development should continue to be the underlying goal. The first requirement was capacity building in developing countries. That could be achieved only through human resources development, which in turn was based upon strong primary and secondary education.

It was recognized that good governance and democratization were essential to the self-reliant efforts of developing countries. However, the need for strong and efficient governance also applied to the United Nations system. In particular, action-oriented programmes were needed to complement the efforts of developing countries. Coordination was crucial. The establishment of field-level coordinating mechanisms in 74 countries by UNDP was a major step forward in strengthening the coordinating role of the United Nations system. Further efforts needed to be made to strengthen the coordination of field offices so that the United Nations system would be able to provide the overall management needed to ensure the effective implementation of operational activities.

Resident coordinators must be given authority to develop overall assistance strategies through dialogue with the recipient Governments. In coordination among agencies, a monitoring function was needed to ensure that the mandate of each organization was strictly adhered to and that no organization was marginalized on the agendas of more powerful, self-interested actors. The Council could play an instrumental role to that end.

His delegation noted with concern that funds for operational activities for development had continued to decrease and that the share of core funds given to development by UNDP had continued to fall. His delegation appreciated the Administrator's efforts to mobilize more funds. It commended

the reform efforts of UNDP and, in general, supported the various initiatives to strengthen substantive partnership with other agencies and institutions and in particular welcomed the plan to assign a senior liaison officer in Washington for the purpose of fostering closer relations with the World Bank.

Mr. HOVE (Zimbabwe) said that his delegation was concerned at the diminishing amount of resources being made available for the operational activities of the United Nations development system. The situation was all the more disturbing since many countries were making strenuous efforts to create an environment conducive to international cooperation for development against a background of increasing development needs. UNDP, for example, had cut its commitments to 70 per cent of the indicative planning figures, which was not only potentially disruptive to ongoing projects but which also caused distortions in national development plans.

The issue of resources was also linked to that of national execution. The increased use of the national execution modality gave countries greater flexibility to engage local expertise, thereby reducing the outflow of resources provided by UNDP and other United Nations agencies.

Zimbabwe believed that the country strategy note could be an effective tool for strengthened coordination at the national level. However, in order to prepare a meaningful country strategy note, the recipient Government needed to undertake a comprehensive review of the economy in order to determine the priority areas. Once fully developed, the country strategy note should be comprehensive, involving not only United Nations agencies and recipient Governments but also bilateral and non-governmental actors.

He welcomed the efforts being made by UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF and WFP to harmonize their programme cycles. Programme cycles which were consistent with national development plans would ensure better coordination among the agencies themselves and between them and the recipient country Governments. Governments would also be able to access all the funds available to them from the funding agencies in any given programme cycle.

National execution should be the principal modality for United Nations funded programmes and projects. The most important factor in determining whether a recipient country should take over the execution of a programme or project, however, should be that country's capacity to do so. The level of development of a recipient country should dictate the pace at which national execution could be undertaken. For its part, the United Nations system should assist recipient countries in strengthening their national execution capabilities. Over the years, Zimbabwe had been steadily increasing its capacity for national execution. Some of the major nationally-executed undertakings included the economic reform programme funded by UNDP and the population policy project supported by UNFPA.

The Bretton Woods institutions increasingly performed functions similar to those traditionally carried out by the United Nations development agencies and programmes. Instead of competition, greater cooperation and consultation were needed between those institutions and the United Nations as they pursued their common goal of promoting sustainable human development.

Mr. KELLOWAY (Australia) said that the new arrangements for the Council's consideration of development issues provided an opportunity to move beyond rhetoric to practically focused outcomes. The Council now had the means at its disposal to provide the policy and coordination guidance which had eluded it in the past.

As a result of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199, a definite improvement could already been seen in the work of the United Nations agencies, particularly the member agencies of JCGP, including considerable effort to improve performance and avoid duplication. There was much greater scope for dialogue within the Council on key aspects of development policy. As the funds and programmes moved together in implementing programmes, it became more feasible to engage constructively on experience in the field as a basis for obtaining consensus at a broad political level on the key development policy issues. The 20/20 concept was one such item which was well worth exploring.

Prioritization of functions and the need to avoid overlap in mandates must continue to receive attention - and it seemed that different agencies had different approaches to that question. The exchange of memoranda of understanding between agencies to avoid overlap was a positive step forward.

Coordination, both at Headquarters and in the field, remained a top priority. Coordination between the JCGP agencies seemed to be moving ahead well; but there was less clarity in the role and links with the specialized agencies, most of which incorporated development functions to varying degrees. Their role in development could be further clarified. Furthermore, the terms of reference of field-level country committees needed to be defined, in particular so as to determine whether they were contributing to the review of various agency programmes.

He asked whether it was expected that more countries would adopt country strategy notes, now that guidelines had been promulgated. The Council should review the adequacy of coordination arrangements with the international financial institutions. The impact and overall effectiveness of agencies was a critical area. Evaluation standards were needed so as to gain a clearer picture of the overall performance of agencies. His delegation recognized the technical difficulties in obtaining a common approach among agencies on evaluation but felt that it was absolutely critical that the agencies should be able to report on how successful they had been and what they had learned from their mistakes.

Mr. PHANIT (Observer for Thailand) said that development was primarily a national responsibility and only through greater self-reliance could a country increase its capacity to absorb assistance from the international community and to play a more active role in international development c operation. The key to development did not lie in official development or in support from the United Nations. Rather, it lay in such factors as political stability, good governance and pragmatic development policies.

The development efforts of States must also be supported by an enabling international environment, which required the liberalization of global trading policies. It was important that all trading partners should observe the rules of free and fair trade. Moreover, in order to ensure the efficient allocation of the world's resources, trade and environmental protection must be mutually compatible.

The agenda for development should serve as an instrument for coordinating activities both within the United Nations and between the Organization, the Bretton Woods institutions and non-governmental organizations. It should be an instrument for creating a unity of purpose in both the policy and operational spheres of those organizations. The agenda for peace and the agenda for development were equally crucial to current efforts to reform the United Nations. The reformed Organization, however, should not spread itself too thinly. United Nations development support could not and should not provide all the answers to the development challenges of all countries. The programmes and funds of the Organization, especially the United Nations Development Programme, must focus on areas of greatest need. In that connection, the agenda for development should serve as a map of the thematic approaches to operational activities. His delegation hoped that the agenda for development would go beyond the development concept and guide the United Nations towards the full realization of its people-centred development mandate.

Mr. SYCHOV (Belarus) said that his delegation supported the efforts to improve inter-agency coordination through JCGP and CCPOQ and was gratified that work had begun on improving coordination at the field level. It believed that resident coordinators should play a more active role in coordinating the efforts of various United Nations bodies at the country level, working out country strategies and harmonizing the programme cycles of the United Nations agencies. It actively supported a further expansion of the "joint premises" concept; his Government had created favourable conditions to that end.

His delegation agreed that the programme approach was useful for the Governments of recipient countries and helped strengthen inter-agency cooperation. The progress made in strengthening national capacity and execution in recipient countries was very important, and those efforts should be continued.

His delegation supported the idea of holding a full-scale review in 1995 of the activities of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF; they had already been successful in funding effective and flexible forms of activity.

His delegation felt that a system of international cooperation should be developed within the United Nations which would contribute to the mobilization of external resources, both technical and financial, for the needs of peace, the economy, the environment, society and democracy.

The Council must ensure effective coordination of operational activities within the United Nations system, including the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions. It was very important to make more efficient use of financial assistance provided by IMF and the World Bank and also of the technical assistance provided through UNDP and other United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies.

The main characteristic of United Nations operational activity was its universality. His delegation welcomed the recent intensification of the work of UNDP and UNICEF on the problems of countries in transition. The decision taken by the UNICEF Executive Board to create a subdivision on central and eastern Europe, the CIS countries and the Baltic countries was to be welcomed. The UNDP Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States should now be made a regional office.

In 1994, his Government had approved a short-term country programme for Belarus; it was the first such programme in the history of Belarus, and would be a basis for the formulation of a document on national strategy. His delegation hoped that the country programme would be submitted without delay to the managing bodies, programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

His delegation was concerned about the reduction of resources for programme implementation and believed that the directors of programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations development system should make efforts to restore previous levels of resources for development.

Mr. FLORÊNCIO (Brazil) said that better governance of operational activities was vital to the reform of the United Nations. Success also required that a substantial increase in resources for operational activities should be assured on a predictable and continuous basis. It was therefore essential that the consultations on the financing of operational activities should proceed in the appropriate working group of the General Assembly.

The first function of the high-level segment of the Council's current session was to examine the stage of implementation of the provisions adopted under the triennial review of operational activities. The second function was to consider the reports of the Executive Boards of the various funds and programmes of the United Nations system. The final function was to provide cross-sectoral coordination and overall guidance on a system-wide basis and to monitor the division of labour between and cooperation within the various bodies of the United Nations system. In that connection, the Council should identify a list of themes for consideration at the subsequent substantive session of the Council in order to enable the Executive Boards to present their conclusions to the segment on operational activities.

His delegation was greatly concerned by the recent trend to use the Executive Boards for purposes for which they were not mandated. Over the years, the funds and programmes ad gradually built up a high degree of credibility in their cooperation with developing countries, not least for the neutrality with which assistance was provided. That credibility would be at risk if boards continued to be used for political ends in the consideration of country programmes.

Ms. ASHRAF (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that, like all the other specialized agencies, UNESCO was seeking new ways of cooperation and a better understanding of what

was needed to make its efforts viable at the national level. UNESCO had had excellent collaboration with UNDP and the World Bank in the global move towards education for all. UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) collaborated very closely in the design and implementation of programmes for environmental education. Both at headquarters and in field offices, new partnerships and a renewed spirit of collegiality were in evidence.

Within the framework of mechanisms of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, UNESCO had joined the efforts of the system to provide team leadership at the country level. In its training of field staff, it emphasized the need to share information and to cooperate closely with UNDP and other United Nations representatives. It also believed that the United Nations team leader in member countries should make optimal use of the comparative advantages offered by the substantive agencies of the system.

Another initiative by UNDP which was in line with the broad aim of General Assembly resolution 47/199 was the new support-cost mechanism. While resource constraints had obliged UNDP to cut back most of its financial commitments, starting with the current year, the support-cost mechanism had been exempted from those reductions. UNESCO welcomed that decision and shared the Administrator's view that it was the most effective means of encouraging United Nations agencies to become more directly involved in programming activities.

Given the increased importance of upstream activities to international development cooperation, UNESCO had taken steps to strengthen its service capacity to Member States in that area by extending its diversified sector-analysis services to human resources development. Moreover, in order to strengthen its multisectoral upstream capacity, the first of a series of training seminars had been organized for headquarters staff. There was still need, however, for a better division of labour and a true partnership between all the actors in international cooperation for development. The creation of a joint UNDP/UNESCO task force to assess the successes and failures of past

cooperation, further develop the principles and areas of future partnerships and monitor the implementation of agreed activities was one step in that direction.

With regard to the Global Environmental Facility and the mechanisms established by UNDP, Member States should take the initiative in making the relevant requests for funding. For its part, UNESCO was ready to provide the technical assistance required in its fields of competence for the formulation and submission of those requests. It was useful to remember that Agenda 21 contained an unequivocal appeal for better cooperation between the funding institutions and the specialized agencies.

For several years, UNESCO had been submitting to its Executive Board a report on its operational activities for development undertaken within the framework of the United Nations system. That report summarized the main trends and policies governing the operational activities of the United Nations system and situated efforts by UNESCO in that context. The list of what UNESCO was doing was exhaustive and it was therefore important to focus on the concrete modalities of interaction in order to further strengthen the process of dialogue.

Mr. MUEGGE (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that there was no doubt that, within the overall system of international development cooperation, the specialized agencies would continue to play an important role as providers to Member States of objective policy and technical advice as well as untied financial and technical cooperation. There was also a growing need to link peace-making activities with development support through immediate post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation aimed at laying the foundation for sustained economic development.

All of those activities were being carried out against a background of severe financial constraints. Nevertheless, the United Nations system was seeking to improve coordination, promote decentralization and enhance the effectiveness of operational activities.

UNIDO proposed to contribute directly to the system-wide goals of socio-economic development, including the achievement of environmentally sustainable industrial development. In addition, it was sharpening its profile as the leading specialized agency for industrial development. In response to the priority needs of developing countries, it was focusing on providing support for industrial development in Member States and on enhancing international industrial cooperation in investment and technology. It hoped in that way to strengthen its role as an effective player in United Nations country teams thereby ensuring that industry and its priority subsectors were an integral element of overall United Nations country strategies.

One dimension of operational activities had been the trend towards upstream activities. There had also been increasing emphasis on providing advisory services on industrial policies and on the institutional framework which constituted the enabling environment for sustainable industrial development in an increasingly competitive global economy. The United Nations country strategy note was a very important concept in the context of which UNIDO proposed to launch a series of country support strategies for industrial development. It was also exploring joint UNDP/UNIDO programming activities and specific areas within the sustainable human development thrust launched by UNDP.

In addition, however, there was a demand for specific downstream services to industry, including environmental protection, energy saving and enhanced competitiveness. UNIDO also promoted contact-creating activities for investment in technological cooperation between private sector entities in developed and developing countries.

Against the background of the changing structures of United Nations operational programmes and the dwindling financial resources available for development cooperation, the rational division of labour was a key issue for all concerned. It was necessary to carefully examine the implications of the current organizational restructuring among and within United Nations organizations in order to avoid duplication. It was also of vital importance

to review the working arrangements between the specialized agencies and that part of the United Nations system which had access to financial resources for cooperation, primarily the Bretton Woods institutions. It was in the interest of all Member States that those financial resources should be effectively used to enable the specialized agencies to carry out their programmes in support of the agenda for development.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1994/SR.18
14 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1994

High-level meeting

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 1 July 1994, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. BUTLER	(Australia)
later:	Mr. BOTEZ (Vice-President)	(Romania)

CONTENTS

STATEMENT BY MR. JOSEPH-ANTOINE BELL, SOCCER STAR FROM THE NATIONAL TEAM OF CAMEROON

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

STATEMENT BY MR. JOSEPH-ANTOINE BELL, SOCCER STAR FROM THE NATIONAL TEAM OF CAMEROON

The PRESIDENT said that Mr. Joseph-Antoine Bell, a soccer star from the national team of Cameroon, currently participating in the World Cup event, would speak on behalf of 80 national soccer teams from around the world which had joined the global anti-poverty campaign supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The campaign was entitled "A Goal: Human Development".

Mr. JOSEPH-ANTOINE BELL (Soccer star from the national team of Cameroon) said that the mobilization of the world of soccer in support of the global anti-poverty campaign was unprecedented. Eighty national soccer teams, including all those which had qualified for the 1994 World Cup, had responded to the call and more teams were joining the campaign every week. Soccer players were uniquely qualified to speak on behalf of the poor, for soccer was the people's sport; many of its players and fans had been born into the very circumstances the global campaign was seeking to eradicate.

Every day, millions of people died as a result of poverty, the mismanagement of public affairs and misplaced priorities. Children could not be guaranteed a safe future in a world of injustice and suffering, where one in four people lived in poverty, where the gap between the poor and those who managed to survive was continually widening and where natural resources were not safeguarded. The situation was particularly shocking because it was well known that it would take only one generation to ensure that no child would go without an education, no human being would be denied either primary health care or safe drinking water and that no one would be condemned to go hungry.

There was no room for hollow words in the anti-poverty campaign or for resolutions that were adopted simply to be ignored. Ultimately, a high price would have to be paid for such cruel, undignified and stupid behaviour. In the immediate term, it might be tempting to "pay on credit", but that would be irresponsible towards future generations. He noted that military interventions, which Member States had witnessed and, at times, had even initiated, always had social causes. It was unthinkable to bequeath the world's children a future characterized by bloody conflict, insecurity in their lives and their jobs, and an environment that was largely destroyed.

In France, Germany, the United Kingdom and many other well-to-do countries, immigration was the major political issue of the day. Those countries could rest assured that nothing would stop the world's desperate poor from reaching their shores in order to escape abject poverty at home. It was therefore in the interest of the wealthier nations to provide intelligent, genuine assistance to those people in order to enable them to survive in their own countries. Soccer players understood the principle of solidarity, for soccer matches were won through teamwork. Individually, the States Members of the United Nations had the power to bring about change; united, they could banish poverty altogether and give hope to future generations. That could be achieved not through words but only through action.

In a world where the influence and the cost of arms remained considerable, there was no excuse for the absence of funds or of the political will necessary to guarantee every human being an education, safe drinking water, food and good health - in short, human dignity. Soccer players were speaking out because it had become urgent to do so. It was time to give priority to the anti-poverty campaign. The international community had covered important meetings to address the emergency situation. The world's best soccer players had become involved, in the hope that those meetings would not be lost opportunities but would constitute a genuine point of departure for the shaping of a better future. He recalled that, 20 years earlier, decisions had been taken concerning the quantity of assistance to be granted

to the poorest countries and that time-limits had been set. And yet, as of 1994, the world was not even half way towards reaching that goal. Of course, requesting aid from the wealthier countries was not the entire solution. The recipients of such aid must use it constructively in a common effort to achieve a better world for all.

Mr. DUGAN (United States of America) said that his country supported the efforts of the United Nations system to fight poverty and welcomed the people-centred development initiative of UNDP and the non-governmental organization Survie. In joining the global anti-poverty campaign, Mr. Bell and his colleagues sent a positive message to all, particularly the world's youth, and provided a very useful role model. The efforts by Mr. Bell and his colleagues reflected the spirit of General Assembly resolution 48/10, which proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal. The resolution had been adopted under an agenda item entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport", which his delegation hoped would provide a context for further debate and action. On behalf of the host country of the World Cup tournament, he wished to thank Mr. Bell and his fellow-players from all over the world for the excitement and example of teamwork they had brought to the United States.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued) (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, E/1994/34, parts I, II and III, E/1994/35, E/1994/64 and Add.1 and 2, E/1994/84, E/1994/93)

The PRESIDENT said that, pursuant to Council decision 1994/218, the second day of the high-level meeting would be devoted to an informal dialogue with heads of agencies, funds and programmes.

Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) expressed appreciation for the Council's guidance concerning inter-agency coordination mechanisms. Those mechanisms would be fully exploited in implementing and monitoring the programme of action to be elaborated at the International Conference on Population and Development. Identifying which functions entities should perform individually (for example, advocacy, funding and financing, programme development, implementation, monitoring, research and

analysis, and norm-setting), and which functions should be performed jointly would help to clarify the division of labour. That would be particularly important in activities relating to cross-sectoral themes and issues, such as social sector development, sustainable human development, the empowerment of women, and population and development. Further consideration should be given to the concept of a 20:20 compact.

UNFPA had always taken a multisectoral and multidimensional approach to population issues and worked in close coordination with other United Nations organizations in the economic and social sectors. It would continue to build on the progress achieved since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system, particularly in its country strategy note (CSN), the harmonization of programme cycles, programme approach, national execution, national capacity-building and decentralization. It would also continue its close collaboration with United Nations partner agencies and organizations, its involvement in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its work through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

The recent annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had proved that the conversion of the former Governing Councils into Executive Boards had been a positive step. It had facilitated dialogue between the Secretariat and the Board and ensured broader participation by a wider range of delegations. UNFPA hoped that the welcome change in governance would result in increased funding of United Nations operational activities on a stable, predictable and assured basis. In looked forward to the debate at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly on the financing of United Nations operational activities. In future, the modalities of financing such activities should reflect the principle of global partnership and the concept of fair burden-sharing. UNFPA hoped that the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199, and resolution 48/162 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related

fields would help to resolve the problem of inadequate resources for operational activities. In conclusion, UNFPA hoped that the Economic and Social Council would support the recent decision taken by its Executive Board to observe the Fund's twenty-fifth anniversary at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) noted that, although the field-level performance of agencies had improved, their evaluation mechanisms could not adequately measure performance output. He therefore wondered how the agencies could convince donors that their contributions were being effectively utilized.

Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) noted the shrinking budget of UNDP and the global reduction in the volume of resources available for economic development and operational activities. In those circumstances, he wondered how available resources could be used more efficiently. He wondered if the answer lay in the design of programmes that were easier to implement, the reduction of administrative costs, or harmonization and coordination, particularly at Headquarters.

Mr. BOEHMER (Germany) said that the country strategy note must become one of the most important management tools for designing programmes of assistance. It should form the basis for country programmes and should be discussed by the Executive Boards of the programmes and agencies during their consideration of country programmes. Perhaps country strategy notes should be updated periodically - or reviewed after an initial one-year period - to ensure that they were still relevant. The country strategy note should be consistent with and complement the policy framework paper submitted by many countries to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

He agreed with the representatives of the United Kingdom and Australia that the agency evaluation mechanisms must be strengthened both on an ex-post and current-performance basis. They must be a true measure of the impact of the various operational activities on development. A project portfolio performance review conducted on a country-by-country basis would be helpful in

that regard and also in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each operation. The portfolio performance review should be used to determine future assistance programmes and the volume and content of assistance.

The 20:20 compact was an interesting idea but must not become another catchy slogan or it would be viewed as naive and simplistic. Well defined policy was far more important than quantitative targets. In general, he was wary of establishing too many quantitative targets, many of which seemed to be duplicating each other.

In conclusion, he was puzzled by the remark made by the representative of Pakistan the day before that neither donors nor agency Executive Boards should set priorities. His Government would find it difficult to provide funding for operational activities if priorities were not defined.

Mr. YAKER (Economic Commission for Africa) said that, from the point of view of the development of Africa, the link between emergency assistance and development must be accepted and made relevant through the proper allocation of resources. In the continuum between the national and regional dimensions of the issue, there was an apparent missing link between the resident coordinators in the field and Headquarters in New York, which probably lay in the regional dimension.

The situation in Africa was continuing to deteriorate despite the resources directed to the continent in recent years. An objective assessment of the state of Africa was needed in order to analyse trends in areas such as income, which had declined, and population, which had risen by some 3 per cent. He would welcome further information on how global security and sustainable development could be ensured if those trends were allowed to continue, and on how urgently needed programmes could be provided within the available resources.

Mr. GRANT (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) said that evaluation and monitoring mechanisms did need improvement, and a major topic of discussion at the Joint Consultative Group on Programming (JCGP) had been the harmonization of methods among agencies. In order to

convince donors that progress was being made, it was essential to set clear goals. That was the purpose of the country strategy note. The national plans of action issuing from the World Summit for Children had resulted in goals to be achieved by 1995 and by 2000. Progress towards those goals was being monitored and, after the 1995 mid-term review, it would soon become clear how much had been achieved.

In reply to the representative of the Russian Federation, he said that efficiency could be increased in two ways: through better administration, involving cost reduction and better coordination, or through programming. Improved programming was the main purpose of the 20:20 proposal. Performance on the part of developing countries was, in fact, improving, although resources were running short. He agreed with the representative of Germany that additional resources would not necessarily solve all problems, but the developing countries had come closer to allocating 20 per cent of their budgets to human development priorities than the industrialized countries, which needed to respond to that progress. A critical lack of external resources could endanger the recent gains achieved.

Mrs. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme) said that a number of delegations had asked what the specialized agencies were doing to prove that their work was worth funding. For its part, the World Food Programme had undertaken a review of all its development work and had looked carefully at areas in which programmes could be strengthened, eliminated or expanded. An overall review of its development projects was available. About 20 per cent of its projects had met their objectives and had been discontinued; a number of others were not meeting expectations and had been terminated immediately. The Programme had also conducted a historical survey of its work. Outside experts had been asked for comments on their experience with its programmes over the years, and those comments had been useful in policy review. The Programme was also beginning the evaluation of emergency projects, such as its response to the drought in southern Africa. A new emphasis was being placed on results, so that successful projects could be

replicated in other situations. The Programme's internal evaluation service was being upgraded, and both internal and external expertise were being used. WFP was also conducted external evaluations, such as the tripartite evaluation recently conducted by Canada, the Netherlands and Norway, and others conducted by USAID and the European Community.

The role of the World Food Programme as a technical manager of programmes was to provide the most efficient assistance possible for people in need. Donor confidence in its work enhanced its ability to operate in the developing world.

In response to the question from Algeria, she said that 54 per cent of the resource target for the biennium had been reached thus far, as compared with 64 per cent for the same date in the previous biennium. With regard to the queries from Australia, about the links between JCGP and the specialized agencies, she said that relations could be improved between the resident coordinators and the technical agencies. The representative of Pakistan had asked if any benefits could result to donor Governments. The World Food Programme purchased food in many countries, including $200 million-worth of food from developing countries, and that could be attractive to donors.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that UNDP had great problems with evaluation because of the breadth of activities. It had recently been asked whether its activities were indeed spread too thin and whether a greater sense of focus and mission and more accountability were needed. The Executive Board had just delivered a strong vote of confidence on that new focus, which would allow decentralization and a concentration of resources at the country level. In order to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation functions, he had placed them directly under the Office of the Administrator, which would also link them more closely to strategic planning. UNDP had also strengthened its annual review of its project portfolio and had more external peer review as well.

In response to the questions from the representative of the Russian Federation, conventional wisdom held that, as resources shrank, they would be

used more efficiently; therefore cutting resources was not necessarily bad. He did not believe that that always increased efficiency, however, as it produced more competition for resources, thus setting in motion responses and processes which were not related to service delivery.

He was pleased to note that the 20:20 concept was gaining support. Its main objective was to ensure that a larger share of resources went to meet the priority needs of the very poor.

The Human Development Report, 1994, although it had generated controversy, was important in that it counteracted the idea that economic growth was all that mattered by keeping human values in the forefront of the international debate. It had editorial independence, and its staff was drawn both from within and outside UNDP. He was reluctant to reduce its already modest budget allocation, since that would reduce the possibilities for staff outreach, consultation and review. The report had proven its value to the developing world and to donors, and the capability to produce it should be strengthened.

Mr. Botez (Romania) took the Chair.

Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had conducted an extensive review of its work over the past 20 years, evaluating both successful, and not so successful programmes on a country-by-country basis. As a result, UNFPA had refined its thematic programme approaches. In general, UNFPA assessed every project it undertook, selecting certain projects for independent external evaluation. UNFPA had conducted several thematic evaluations in order to sharpen its sectoral strategy in programme areas. Specifically, family planning services, adolescent and educational programmes and the programme on women, population and development had been extensively reviewed. Routine evaluations included tripartite and bipartite reviews for national execution projects, mid-term reviews for country programmes and end-of-programme reviews for selected programmes. UNFPA was actively contributing

to the country strategy note through its own programme review and strategy development exercise, which established a policy dialogue with Governments.

In reply to the representative of the Russian Federation, who had asked what could be done to increase funding of the specialized agencies and reduce administrative costs, she recalled that all the governing bodies of those agencies had participated in the support cost study. Further discussion was required in the Economic and Social Council on a proper division of labour and responsibilities to avoid unnecessary overlapping.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), addressing questions regarding the country strategy note, said that delegates should refer to the document entitled "Country Strategy Note", issued in March 1994, which provided guidance elements for the preparation, design and implementation of the CSN and dealt explicitly with the way in which the CSN provided the framework for the country programmes and with the monitoring and evaluation of the CSN. The link between the CSN and other coordinating documents was also discussed. In general, it should be remembered that the starting-point of the CSN was the willingness of a country to formulate such a note. He noted that 58 countries had expressed that willingness and it was expected that country strategy notes would be completed for 43 of those countries during 1994.

Mrs. VASISHT (India) said that it would be helpful if delegates were kept informed of the operationalization of a resolution as it occurred, and she asked specifically if gender principles had evolved for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199. Secondly, she wondered whether the availability of national expertise in the area of country programme evaluation was being fully explored before outside monitoring agencies were employed. Thirdly, she enquired what mechanisms were used in the audit of indicative planning figures and other financial resources in country programmes and whether donor input was ever considered. Fourthly, she asked if steps were being taken to operationalize the 20:20 concept, commenting that it did not generate resources for developing countries.

Fifthly, she asked what progress had been achieved in the joint and co-sponsored programme on AIDS, specifically with regard to resource flows, and, lastly, she sought clarification concerning the meaning of the expression "peer review" and the extent of its scope.

Her delegation awaited with great interest the administrative report of the United Nations Development Programme to be submitted in 1995, and believed that the shift from quantitative to qualitative factors called for careful consideration, as the areas involved remained untested by a clear mandate. Her delegation's support for further funding would depend on the value and comprehensiveness of that administrative report. Lastly, she fully agreed with the representative of Pakistan that domestic prioritization depended solely on national Governments.

Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that his delegation was pleased with the cooperative spirit shown by agency heads in their efforts to strengthen the role of resident coordinators. He asked what steps agency heads were taking to ensure that those efforts filtered down to the lowest level of each agency, both in the field and at headquarters. Secondly, he asked what agencies were doing to address the fact that increasing demands were being made on the resident coordinators. Lastly, he suggested that each of the Executive Boards at their next meeting should discuss policy issues requiring the involvement of the Economic and Social Council and make recommendations for consideration at the next organizational meeting of the Council.

Mr. MUEGGE (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that his organization had done a complete review of its services, including screening, appraisal and evaluation of the development objectives of recipient countries and the quality and cost-efficiency of services. The major difficulty was in securing resources for reviews and programmes, rather than in conducting the activities themselves. Some member States had provided financial resources for UNIDO to carry out detailed investigations in the field; however, resources for larger programmes were dwindling. He proposed

increasing a combined, system-wide evaluation in recipient countries to assess the extent to which the United Nations system had been able to meet such objectives as poverty alleviation. It might also be useful to evaluate United Nations field representation and, eventually, the country strategy note.

Mr. KELLOWAY (Australia) said that bilateral donor and recipient countries alike had experienced extensive change over the past 20 years, resulting in an increasing demand for efficiency. Both recipients and donors in bilateral activities were seeking well designed projects, and those agencies which were most open to reform would be most likely to see an increase in resources. He asked agency heads to describe their administrative costs as a percentage of their programmes, and enquired whether they could provide a strategic planning document that set forth in clear terms their mandate, goals and objectives, the outcomes expected and the manner in which they were measured. That document should not be an annual report, nor a mid-term plan, which was frequently a compendium of anticipated activities.

Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) said that the comparative advantage of the United Nations in carrying out operational activities and providing assistance to developing countries was its flexibility and neutrality and the ability to provide such technical assistance to countries with varying types and levels of development. That flexibility and neutrality would be undermined if each governing body set firm priorities restricting its agency's activities. For instance, the former Governing Council of UNDP had adopted six broad themes for its fifth programming cycle, some of which were relevant for certain countries and not for others. Problems arose when there was forced universal application of all themes, regardless of the specificities of each individual country. Ultimately, it was for each developing country to determine which global themes were applicable to it. Donors could promote priority themes through their bilateral programmes, but once funding occurred through the multilateral system, neutrality had to be respected.

It should be borne in mind that funding through the United Nations programmes was of benefit to donors as well as recipients. While her

delegation appreciated the fact that donors had problems, in the current world climate, in selling the idea of funding for development assistance to their legislatures, it should not be forgotten that donors received benefits in the areas of employment and procurement, as the Executive Director of the World Food Programme had suggested. Her delegation would very much like to have statistics in those areas.

While evaluation was a valuable exercise, she felt that there were far too many evaluators; donor country after donor country evaluated an organization in an endless round, and there was no input from developing nations.

In response to the question raised by the United States representative concerning the proper forum for policy issues, it was her understanding that, according to the Economic and Social Council's new mandate, its operational activity segment was in fact the right forum for discussion of policy, while technical questions and issues specific to each programme were left to the individual Executive Boards.

Mr. Butler (Australia) resumed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT invited the representatives of the specialized agencies to respond to the questions that had been raised.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme), in response to a number of questions from the representative of India, said that there was indeed national involvement in the evaluation of country programmes. Mid-term reviews were very much joint recipient-Government/UNDP exercises. With regard to donor involvement in auditing indicative planning figures (IPF), there was no specific audit of IPFs, and donors were in no way involved in audits. Audits were handled solely by UNDP internal auditors and the United Nations Board of Auditors. As far as he was aware, no steps had yet been taken to operationalize the 20:20 concept. With regard to peer review of reports, UNDP's Executive Board resolution referred to both consultations and peer review, which were two different things. Peer review involved asking experts knowledgeable on subjects covered in human development

reports to provide an independent review, in a version of peer review analogous to that traditional with scholastic journals. Consultations, on the other hand, were held with Governments at various stages.

He had been pleased to hear the representative of Australia say that agencies that made themselves more efficient would receive additional resources. UNDP already had something analogous to the business plan that that representative had mentioned, but in stages.

He wished to assure the representative of Pakistan that her view of how global themes should be applied in practice coincided precisely with UNDP's own view.

In response to the concerns expressed by the United States representative, he wished to explain that the coordination assignment was indeed a substantial part of the resident coordinator's responsibilities, demanding anywhere from 25 to 75 per cent of his time. In his view, that merely underscored the importance of the institution. Coordination was essential to strengthening the network and achieving a more effective and unified United Nations system at the country level. UNDP did have a programme to strengthen the capacity of the resident coordinators. He would be happy to make available a document produced for a meeting of senior officials describing what steps they were taking.

Mr. GRANT (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund), in response to the questions raised by the representative of Pakistan, said that there was broad agreement that each country should set its own priorities, hence the country strategy note. But the world community did set some common goals, as it had done at the World Summit for Children with the participation of all countries, including Pakistan. Goals sometimes appeared to be imposed from the top down, but in order to eliminate problems such as guinea worm disease, iodine deficiency, AIDS and polio myelitis, a global effort was needed and had been agreed upon. Moreover, in any discussion of benefit to the donor, he felt that it was important to remember that the chief aim of assistance programmes was to help recipient countries.

Discussion of the 20:20 proposal was becoming stalled because of the absence of a definition of the concept, the tendency to confuse it with the larger issue of sustainable development and the fear that it would tend to restrict official development assistance. The 20:20 proposal said nothing about conditionality. He believed that, if the 20:20 goal were reached by donor countries, public support for development assistance would actually increase. Most people wanted their money to go towards helping others. He agreed, however, that more input did not automatically guarantee better results.

The definition of 20:20 human development priorities would certainly encompass basic health, basic education, family planning, water and sanitation. Obviously, that did not provide all the money needed to overcome poverty. It merely covered the basic services and did not touch on the problem of jcb creation. Other core expenditures would be needed for that purpose, and perhaps other targets would be set at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. He wished to point out that, at the Dakar conference held in November 1992, 20:20 as a vision to work towards had been endorsed by 18 donor countries and 46 African countries. At the Cairo meeting of non-aligned countries, participants had endorsed what they had called the "20:20 Vision". There seemed to be a consensus on the direction in which to go, although the specifics remained to be worked out. He would say that in fact 20:20 had become operational in some countries. Some of the national plans of action had incorporated the goal of 20 per cent allocation to human development priorities.

Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that she wished to respond to four questions that had been raised. The representative of India had asked if UNFPA always used outside experts. On the contrary, a list of experts in each country was maintained, and national experts were always called upon first. In response to the question from the representative of the United States, she would say that the field staff was indeed overburdened and that the headquarters staff was also becoming

overburdened, with all the inputs and requests for reports from other agencies. On the subject of auditing, her answer was the same as that given by Mr. Speth. In response to the question asked by the representative of Japan the day before, UNFPA was experimenting with the decentralizing of authority to the field. Decentralization would be expanded to additional countries once accountability problems had been worked out. Some problems arose in trying to coordinate with other agencies that did not have the same degree of decentralization at the field level.

Mrs. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme) said that she wished to address five points that had been raised. With regard to administrative costs, in 1993 WFP had had total expenditures of $US 1.6 billion and overhead expenditures of $US 96 million, or 6 per cent. While WFP was somewhat proud of that figure, two studies, one internal and one external, had shown that actually not enough money was spent on monitoring, accounting and management to cover those areas adequately. A cost study done by an outside firm was available upon request. She did not believe that there were common standards among the United Nations agencies for describing overheads. WFP used its own system. In response to the Australian representative's ideas about a corporate strategy, she could point to a policy document of a prospective nature prepared for consideration by WFP's governing body. She would be glad to share it and obtain input from the Council members.

The United States representative had asked if the Economic and Social Council could have the benefit of recommendations from the agencies for its work in 1995. The agenda for WFP's forthcoming December meeting included a review of the input that should be provided to the Economic and Social Council next year. The thrust of the review was the implementation of resolutions 48/162 and 47/199 and the changes needed to accomplish it, but the scope of the review could be broadened if the Council so wished.

The United States representative had also asked what steps WFP was taking to make coordination a way of life. A memorandum of understanding had

been concluded between WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which she felt was a model for coordination. WFP had met with UNICEF to discuss coordination in emergency activities. WFP was moving towards the programme approach with expert assistance from UNDP/UNFPA. Once the transition to a programme approach had been completed, coordination with the other agencies would be facilitated. She could cite many further examples of coordination. Project ideas, for instance, were circulated to all members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), and also to FAO and other technical agencies. When UNDP had its world-wide meeting, the other agencies were invited to participate. Coordination issues were a major topic of discussion at the WFP country directors' meeting. There were many joint training projects, such as the Turin programme. The JCGP 1994 meeting chaired by UNICEF was deliberately held in a developing country, Bangladesh, in order to emphasize coordination on development problems.

The PRESIDENT invited delegations to pose follow-up questions.

Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) thanked the Executive Director of UNICEF for clarifying his earlier question, which he believed the representative of Pakistan had misunderstood.

Mr. PEDROSO (Cuba) noted that there was a paradox. On the one hand there was a growing effort to decentralize development activities in the field. At the same time, coordination efforts were increasingly centralizing functions at headquarters and at the level of the resident coordinator.

Mr. KELLOWAY (Australia) said that he had received answers to his two questions regarding administrative costs and a corporate or strategic plan from some of the agencies but not from all. He would pursue those answers at a later time.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.